

Dear Commissioners:

Stop hidden phone fees so I can truly compare prices of phone services. I support the petition filed by the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates and endorsed by other consumer advocacy organizations. CG Docket No. 04-208, Petition for Declaratory Ruling Regarding Truth-In-Billing and Billing Format, is long overdue.

Phone bills should be truthful and easy to understand. As a business person, I charge a comprehensive fee for my services. My clients pay me the same, simple amount per month. This fee includes all of my expenses, taxes, insurances and my--understandable--profit, which also includes my advertising and materials. I do all right. I'm not greedy. I'm proud of my work. In the grocery store, I must look for bargains and cashmere is a once in ten year proposition. I do not live in a twenty-room house. I do not own a jet. I'm saving up for a hybrid car. I recycle and pollute our planet as little as possible, exploring all possibilities. I do not abuse other species. Enough said.

Because this practice is tolerated by the FCC, long distance and wireless phone companies are able to hide the true cost of service. These add-ons make the advertised price of service significantly less than the amount of the check I have to write each month to pay the bill. Competition will not work if consumers cannot accurately compare prices when shopping for service.

Many states are stepping up to address this problem. They should be allowed to proceed. However, the FCC shouldn't shirk its responsibility, nor limit states from doing more.

The FCC should immediately grant the NASUCA petition to investigate billing practices, and prohibit phone and wireless companies from imposing separate monthly fees, line items or surcharges unless expressly mandated by law or the charge is expressly authorized by a governmental authority.